

COALITION ANNOUNCES

The Bay Area's Best Workplaces for Commuters

Employers Step Up to Cut Down Employee Stress and Drive Times

San Francisco (Oct. 24, 2002) - As further confirmation that "it's the journey that counts," The Bay Area's Best Workplaces for Commuters Coalition today recognized 84 employers for being placed on the first-ever list of **The Bay Area's Best Workplaces for Commuters**. The list spotlights Bay Area employers committed to improving quality of life for harried commuters while also reducing traffic and air pollution. The Bay Area's Best Workplaces for Commuters Coalition is a group made up of Bay Area business, transportation, human resource, and environmental organizations, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Listed employers offer employees key commuting benefits such as employer provided transit passes, vanpool subsidies, bike commuter facilities, onsite day care, and telework programs. For a complete list of **The Bay Area's Best Workplaces for Commuters** go to <www.commuterchoice.gov>.

"Our average commuter is spending more than an entire workweek stuck in traffic each year," said Robin Snyder, EPA Bay Area Commuter Choice program manager. "Every workday, congestion causes Bay Area commuters to spend more than 155,000 extra hours in traffic—that's 17 years and more than \$1.8 million of wasted productivity per day. That's why we wanted to recognize the employers on **The Bay Area's Best Workplaces for Commuters** list for their commitment to saving their employees time and money, while reducing the congestion and pollution caused by so many cars on our roads."

The Bay Area's Best Workplaces for Commuters Coalition includes Bay Area Air Quality Management District, Bay Area Council, EPA, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Northern California Human Resources Association, RIDES for Bay Area Commuters, Inc., Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group, and Yahoo! Inc.

On September 24, the coalition launched **The Bay Area's Best Workplaces for Commuters** with an invitation letter and application form to 6,500 Bay Area organizations. 84 employers representing more than 154,000 employees qualified as **The Bay Area's Best Workplaces for Commuters**.

To qualify as one of **The Bay Area's Best Workplaces for Commuters**, organizations must provide:

- A central point of contact for information, who actively informs employees of commuter benefits available.
- Access to a regional or employer-provided Guaranteed/Emergency Ride Home program.
- At least one primary commuter benefit, which can include a monthly transit/vanpool pass subsidy, cash in lieu of free parking, or a significant telecommuting program.

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- At least three supporting commuter benefits, which can include carpool/vanpool incentives, lockers/showers for bikers or walkers, incentives for living near work, or onsite amenities such as day care or dry cleaning.

These criteria also ensure that employers on the list meet the *National Standard of Excellence* as established by EPA's Commuter ChoiceSM Leadership Initiative, which recognizes organizations providing outstanding commuter benefits to their employees.

"The Bay Area is home to some of the nation's most congested traffic," said Libby Sartain, senior vice president of human resources for Yahoo! Inc., a Commuter ChoiceSM Employer since 2001. **"The Bay Area's Best Workplaces for Commuters** list shows that many local employers are addressing the issue by helping workers reduce the stress that goes along with commuting to work. We want to showcase these organizations and encourage others to follow their lead."

"It really comes down to a quality of life issue that affects all of us in the Bay Area," said Michael Cunningham, vice president of the Bay Area Council. "Bay Area commute times have increased nearly 21 percent in the past two decades, with more than 2 million people driving alone to work in 2000. More and more employers in the Bay Area are recognizing that commuter benefits help ensure that employees are more productive when they arrive at work because of reduced commuting stress. At the end of the day, fewer cars on the road means a cleaner and healthier Bay Area, which is a priority for everyone."

About the Commuter ChoiceSM Leadership Initiative

The Commuter ChoiceSM Leadership Initiative is a free and voluntary program, recognizing employers nationwide that offer a comprehensive package of commuter benefits. Participating organizations, designated Commuter ChoiceSM Employers, must meet a *National Standard of Excellence* established by EPA. Commuter ChoiceSM Employers improve employee job satisfaction and save money from reduced payroll taxes. Employees enjoy reduced stress and delays caused by driving alone to work and save money by using employer-provided commuter benefits and reducing use of personal vehicles. For more information, go to <www.commuterchoice.gov>.

About the Bay Area's Best Workplaces for Commuters Coalition

The coalition is composed of Commuter ChoiceSM Champions, Supporters, and Employers—leading government and business organizations in the Bay Area working to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, cut global warming emissions, and make commuting less stressful and costly for employers and employees.

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